

WARRIORS

Quarterly Magazine for the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs

SPRING 2009



Leadership
on the Trail



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Features:

- Commando Warrior Tests Joint Force Alaska** 8
Guard Aviators Transport Arctic Care Teams 12
Alaska Army National Guard Soldier Finishes Iditarod 16
Task Force Arctic Eagle Digs its Talons into Training 18

Departments:

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|----------------------|----|
| For the People | 2 | Family Support | 25 |
| My Turn | 3 | ESGR | 26 |
| Dispatches from the Front | 5 | Who We Are | 27 |
| Where in the World | 6 | Awards & Decorations | 28 |
| Joint Forces | 11 | Promotions | 30 |
| Homeland Security | 15 | Retirements | 31 |
| Missile Defense | 20 | Start of the Trail | 32 |
| Education | 22 | Training Schedule | 32 |
| Veterans | 24 | | |

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Leadership on the Trail. Lance Mackey, left, three-time Iditarod champion, sends off Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie, Alaska Army National Guard, with a good luck handshake at the Willow start of the 2009 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Alexie, a 2009 Iditarod rookie, trained with the veteran musher for months leading up to the race. Alexie, sponsored by the Alaska Army National Guard, finished in 37th place.

Photos: Brandon Oursler, National Guard Strength Readiness Support Center



Arctic Sunrise.

A UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief with the Alaska Army National Guard's 1/207th Aviation does last minute inspections of the helicopter in the early morning sunrise before giving the pilots the go-ahead at the Alaska Army

National Guard Hangar in Bethel. Five Black Hawk helicopters were stationed in Bethel by the Guard as part of Operation Arctic Care 2009, a joint forces medical readiness and logistics training initiative focused on providing health care and educational activities to 11 remote and underserved Alaska communities throughout the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. For more on Arctic Care see page 12. Photo: Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, DMVA Public Affairs

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veterans and families are invited and encouraged. Please send articles and photos with name, phone number, e-mail, complete mailing address and comments to:

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For the People

Governor Sarah Palin
Commander in Chief



Mentoring Tomorrow's Leaders

Leadership is needed beyond our halls of state government and beyond the battlefield. Leadership is needed in our communities and our families. The Alaska

Department of Military & Veterans Affairs is giving the skills of leadership to our young people, and the Alaska Legislature is helping make this possible.

The Alaska Military Youth Academy is the obvious source of this leadership training, as leadership/followership is one of the core values of the program. However, young people need facilities to learn and grow that do not distract them from the education process. The legislature has appropriated capital budget money to fix the aging facilities at AMYA, and things have come a long way. The original buildings on Fort Richardson were built in the 1950s for regional National Guard training exercises. Now these buildings are being remodeled to meet the modern needs of the cadets: high speed internet, the latest culinary tools and privacy suitable for today's standards.

The Alaska National Guard is training new recruits, men and women, for leadership roles in communities across our great state. Young people can learn the skills of military police and serve their community as village public safety officers, or they can join the Alaska State Troopers through the Troops to Troopers program. Young people can also help their friends and loved ones by learning medical skills that are much needed in rural Alaska. The Alaska Army National Guard has openings for medics who will serve their fellow Soldiers one weekend a month and two weeks a year, and work in the private sector as medical experts Monday through Friday.

Leadership comes in many forms and is frequently delivered by those who have received a leadership calling of their own. I thank the leaders in every community across this state for taking charge and caring for their neighbors and their loved ones. I hope you answer the call and receive leadership training from the Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs. For those leaders who are reading this, I encourage you to mentor tomorrow's leaders. Your knowledge will provide a strong foundation for a better future. ■



Supporting Alaska's Military. Governor Sarah Palin shoots a special commercial at the Alaska National Guard Armory a week before Super Bowl XLIII to thank and honor Alaskan service members serving overseas. NBC aired the spot during the Super Bowl pre-game coverage. Featured in the television shoot were troops and family members representing the active-duty, Guard and Reserve forces who all welcomed the governor with loud cheers and big smiles in appreciation of her support of the military. Photo: Staff Sergeant Eric Hamilton, 176th Wing



My Turn

Lieutenant General (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell
Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard
& Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military & Veterans Affairs



Leading the Way to a Future of Success

Leadership is being demonstrated by the dedicated employees at the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs every day.

Most recently, the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management took the time to work with the Alaska Volcano Observatory and many local governments to prepare communities for the impending eruption of Mount Redoubt. As a result of this work, people were prepared and ready when the volcano blew; there was a calm, organized feeling with Alaskans in affected communities.

Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie of the Alaska Army National Guard is another example of leadership. He followed his dreams to run and finish the Iditarod, and he is a positive example for young people across our state. Alexie showed thousands of young people that if you stay off drugs and alcohol and work hard to follow your dreams, you can accomplish anything.

Alexie finished the Iditarod in 37th place and received the ExxonMobil 37th Iditarod Award – a gold coin valued at \$2,500.

We are very proud of Alexie's accomplishments along the trail and in preparation for the race. We look forward to seeing young people join the Alaska Army National Guard to follow in his footsteps.

There was a tremendous showing of leadership by the Alaska Military Youth Academy this past year. The largest class in the school's 15-year history graduated in February. One hundred sixty-one cadets finished the most rigorous school in Alaska and committed to a life of excellence through discipline. These cadets come from communities in rural and urban Alaska and will go back to their communities and families with a newfound purpose and confidence.

We all have an obligation to give our best to our families, our jobs and our community. This is what leadership means, to achieve excellence and strive for greatness every day of the week. You can make a difference in Alaska and see the results of your good work more quickly than in other states. We live in a blessed great land, and I encourage you to start being a leader today. ■



Welcome to the Alaska Air National Guard. Lieutenant General (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, administers the state of Alaska's Oath of Enlistment to 24 new Alaska Air National Guardsmen from the territory of Guam. The Guardsmen are part of an initiative between the state and the territory to enlist maintenance personnel into the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing. The oath took place during the 2009 Guam Air National Guard's Annual Training Conference in February. Photo: Courtesy Guam National Guard

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Dispatches from the Front...

Arctic Freeze Brings Out the Best in Communicators

By Lieutenant Colonel Charles Parker, Alaskan Command

As the winter sun hung low along the horizon and temperatures hovered below freezing, Arctic communicators from Southcentral Alaska joined together for an innovative and unique contingency communications exercise.

Service members, civilians and contractors gathered to integrate multiple disparate communications systems representing more than five separate Department of Defense organizations.

The Alcantra National Guard Armory, located near Wasilla, provided the central backdrop for one of Alaska's most challenging communications exercises in recent history. The site was configured to emulate a large-scale emergency incident response site with wide-ranging communications requirements.

The Alaska National Guard's new Joint Incident Site Communications Capability package was the central focal point at the Alcantra National Guard Armory. The JISCC possesses a unique and highly capable satellite-based communications package. It provides first responders with radio software interfaces, wireless Internet access and video teleconference, in addition to numerous other IP-based capabilities. The JISCC is currently undergoing fielding in all 50 states and four territories.

With a uniquely Alaskan focus, this year's Arctic Freeze exercise paralleled the national-level exercise Vigilant Shield 2009. Alaska's high levels of geological activity and the vulnerability of commercial communications networks to natural and man-made disasters required exercise planners to rely heavily on satellite-based systems. This allowed users to reach back to robust networks in the Lower 48 and Hawaii.

Whether bringing together interagency partners for a video teleconference linked across four separate satellite communications systems or extending coalition networks via tactical line-of-site radios, expert communicators were up to every challenge faced during the Arctic Freeze exercise.

All of the participants agreed the exercise was a positive step forward in understanding each organization's contingency communications capabilities and enhancing working relationships. ■

Guard Rescues Stranded Snowmachiners

By Specialist Margaret J. Moonin
DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Alaska Air National Guardsmen successfully rescued two men from a ravine in the vicinity of Summit Lake when their snowmachine became stuck in deep snow in late February.

The 11th Rescue Coordination Center dispatched the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons from Kulis Air National Guard Base after receiving a call from Alaska State Troopers, who reported two men stranded in a steep ravine eight miles north of Paxson.

Upon arriving on scene, the HH-60 Pave Hawk landed on a knoll near the two riders, while the HC-130 Hercules set up a communication link with the RCC. Pararescuemen disembarked from the Pave Hawk and trudged through deep snow to reach the men and assist them back to the helicopter.

The stranded snowmachiners told pararescuemen that while riding their snowmachines with two other men, one of them got stuck in deep snow. Unable to get the snowmachine free, and extremely cold and wet, two of the riders went for help.

The pararescuemen helped the men back to the Pave Hawk where one of the riders was treated for mild frostbite to his feet. Pararescuemen cut away the injured man's wet clothes and bundled him in a double sleeping bag before the helicopter lifted out of the ravine.

The men were later taken to an Anchorage hospital for further medical care.

The 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons were awarded two saves for this mission. ■



Testing the System. Staff from the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management work in the State Emergency Coordination Center during a statewide test of the Tsunami Warning System in March. The test was conducted using live tsunami test codes. DHS&EM staff members called all of Alaska's tsunami-vulnerable communities to ensure that the tsunami warning was heard and that the system worked as designed. Photo: Kathy Dawson, DHS&EM

Where in the World

Alaska Army National Guard Aviators Deploy

By Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...

Thirty-two aviators from the Alaska Army National Guard deployed to Iraq for approximately nine months to provide logistics support as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

A departure ceremony in April at the Alaska National Guard Armory on Fort Richardson included friends and family who all bid the deploying Guard members farewell.

The Guard members, from F Company, 1/207th Aviation, will be transporting cargo, equipment and personnel across Iraq and Kuwait using the C-23 Sherpa fixed-wing aircraft, which the company flies here in Alaska. The Sherpa aircraft are able to take small loads and go to some locations where the larger aircraft of Air Force transports don't go.

"This is a proven company of Alaska Army National Guard aviators," said Lieutenant General (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. "The company most recently deployed for six months in 2007 and performed to the highest standards resulting in a successful deployment. We wish them another safe and successful overseas tour."

During their deployment, they will utilize aircraft already in theater. They did not take any Sherpa aircraft from Alaska.

The deploying Soldiers hail from Anchorage, Eagle River, the Mat-Su Valley, Juneau and Fairbanks. ■

Partners in Public Safety. Lieutenant B. Byambatulga, of the Armed Forces of Mongolia Military Police, left, and Staff Sergeant Lawrence Erickson, of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Logistics Readiness Squadron and Alaska State Troopers, gather at the Law Enforcement and Peacekeeping Operations Subject Matter Expert Exchange in February. Members of the Alaska law enforcement community traveled to Mongolia to share operational ideas and practices with their Mongolian counterparts.

Photo: Gary Whitaker, U.S. Army Pacific



Nikolai • Fort Greely • Eielson AFB
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Mt. Redoubt

Ash Fall Activity. Alaska's Mount Redoubt volcano blows ash and steam emissions that stream off to the northeast on this March day. Terrain in the foreground is covered with ash from eruptions that started on March 22 and have continued since. The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management prepared for a possible Mount Redoubt eruption by providing the public with various informational resources through public service announcements and outreach education. Ash fall and emergency preparedness brochures are available on the state's Web site at www.ready.alaska.gov. Photo: Courtesy the Alaska Volcano Observatory, U.S. Geological Survey and Game McGimsey



Heading to Iraq. The Alaska Army National Guard's Major Robert Seymour, commander of F Company, 1/207th Aviation, leads his unit in a salute during the company's deployment ceremony in April at the Alaska National Guard Armory. The company deployed 32 Soldiers from Alaska to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Photo: Sergeant Karima Turner, DMVA Public Affairs

Gobi Wolf Exercises Disaster Management in Mongolia

By Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance

ULAANBAATAR, Mongolia ... Gobi Wolf, a bilateral disaster response exercise, was held jointly by the U.S. Department of Defense and the Mongolian government in March and April. The exercise, which included a train derailment scenario on a major railway artery in Mongolia, required

multiple levels of response and was aimed at supporting Mongolia's disaster management planning.

The Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, a direct reporting unit to U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii, executed the exercise along with Mongolia's National Emergency Management Agency. The execution came at the request of the U.S. Ambassador to Mongolia, the Honorable Mark C. Minton. Partners included Alaska's Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, the Alaska National Guard

Mentor on the Trail. A student from the Top of the Kuskokwim School in Nikolai looks on as Staff Sergeant Russell Throckmorton, Drug Demand Reduction noncommissioned officer, in orange, and Cathy Walters, right, the 2009 Teacher on the Trail, assist another student with one of the many team building activities offered as a part of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race Education program. For more information on the Mentor on the Trail program, see page 23.

Photo: Courtesy Alaska National Guard



Kosovo

Afghanistan

Iraq

Kuwait

Qatar

Weapons Qualification. First Lieutenant Brett Haker, foreground, D Company, 1/207th Aviation commander, and other 1/207th Aviation Soldiers prepare to fire their M-9 pistols on the range at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, during weapons qualification in April. The unit is currently deployed as part of a multi-state peacekeeping task force to Kosovo. For more on the deployment, see page 18.

Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Roach, 1/207th Aviation

Mission Take Off. An Alaska Air National Guard KC-135 Stratotanker from the 168th Air Refueling Wing takes off from a runway at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Sixty-three members of the 168th Air Refueling Wing deployed there for approximately three months in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Photo: Courtesy U.S. Air Force



and the U.S. Army War College. Other partners included the Asia Foundation, Institute for Strategic Studies, Mongolia Railroad and the Mongolia Department of Transportation.

"This exercise promulgates U.S. commitment to a bilateral relationship with Mongolia, including the support of NEMA, which was formed five years ago," said Greg Flick, head of COE's Disaster Management unit. Alaska and Mongolia have a partnership under the National Guard's State Partnership Program that was formalized in 2005.

The exercise was broken down into

three main phases over a month. The first phase in early March focused on Incident Command Training for both senior and mid-level planners, and the second phase was a table top exercise. A third and final field exercise on the railroad scenario was executed in early April. Fifty participants, ranging from first responders to ministerial-level leaders, as well as private and industry mining sector participants were involved.

"This exercise is a great opportunity for the U.S. and Mongolia to learn from each other, such as different response techniques and inter-agency coordination within their respective systems," Flick said. ■

of responsibility.

In 2008, the 340th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron out of Al Udeid was a direct contributor to the Global War on Terrorism by offloading more than 155 million pounds of fuel to coalition aircraft. This directly contributed to more than 520 intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions, plus 290 aero-medical evacuations and 65 combat missions in support of coalition troops on the ground.

The end result is that launching the GAR directly supports our troops, and Alaska Air National Guardsmen were at the forefront of this mission. ■

Air Guardsmen Pivotal in Qatar

By Lieutenant Colonel Robert Mackelprang, 168th Air Refueling Wing

AL UDEID AIR BASE, Qatar
... Sixty-three members from the Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing arrived here in late December to perform air refueling missions in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Alaska Guardsmen have integrated themselves into every corner of the air operations at Al Udeid. Five aircrews and at least 10 staff members participated in the daily planning and execution of KC-135 missions, and launch times were around the clock.

"Launch the GAR!" was the usual response to the ringing phone on the corner desk at Al Udeid. The GAR, passionately known as the Ground Alert Response aircraft, is married with the alert B-1B aircraft. Both respond to a tasking that flows from Central Command Combined Air Operations Center and the alert controllers in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa.

Al Udeid is the central linch pin for both Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. It is home to more than 60 heavy combat aircraft: KC-135, Rivet Joint, RC-135 and B-1B bombers.

These aircraft share the ramp with more than 40 Air Mobility Command and NATO aircraft. It's become the hub of activity for support operations and mobility to and from the commands' areas

Commando WARRIOR

Tests Joint Force Alaska



Guam Training. Commando Warrior holds an Urban Operation exercise for Pacific Air Forces Security Forces members out of Kulis Air National Guard, Eielson and Elmendorf Air Force bases in January.

Photo: Airman First Class Courtney Witt, U.S. Air Force



Air Base Defense Training. Members from the 176th Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, participate in the Commando Warrior Urban Operations exercise in Guam in January. The curriculum during Commando Warrior includes intense air base defense training that all security forces members must complete before deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom.

Photo: Airman First Class Courtney Witt, U.S. Air Force

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Thirty security forces members from the Alaska Air National Guard joined their active duty counterparts from Elmendorf and Eielson Air Force Bases to form an Alaska task force dubbed “Operation Joint Force Alaska” at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam in January.

The Alaska task force traveled to the Regional Training Center to take part in the Commando Warrior Urban Operations exercise. This mission of the Regional Training Center of Commando Warrior is to enhance the combat readiness of Pacific Air Forces through training and evaluation of force protection and ground combat skills.

While there, the Airmen participated in an Operational Readiness Inspection, which evaluates a unit’s combat readiness and ability to conduct air base defense operations at a deployed location.

“By combining Commando Warrior and an Operational Readiness Inspection, this saved the Air Force more than \$300,000 and provided a realistic scenario for our Guardsmen,” said Chief Master Sergeant Alan Carvajal, 168th Security Forces manager. “Instead of sending teams of inspectors to Alaska, the inspectors were able to evaluate our Air Guardsmen’s capabilities during a relevant exercise.”

During Commando Warrior, security forces were also deployed to a simulated war zone to test their ability to react in a high-stress environment. Noise, smoke and simulated munitions, combined with Guam’s heat and humidity, created a realistic combat environment troops may experience overseas in Iraq or Afghanistan.

“With regular deployments down-range where we integrate with our active duty brethren, this exercise was definitely a win-win situation for the Alaska National Guard,” Carvajal said.

The Alaska Guardsmen received high marks for their participation in Commando Warrior and the Operational Readiness Inspection. Master Sergeant Kaleo Vicente, Technical Sergeant David Pepper and Staff Sergeant Brian Zeisel were recognized as distinguished graduates for their overall performance during Commando Warrior. In addition, three more Guardsmen, Master Sergeant Bryan Morberg, Technical Sergeant Michael Zener and Senior Airman Holly Arant, were recognized as outstanding performers during the Operational Readiness Inspection. ■



Perimeter Patrol. Security forces members from the 176th Wing at Kulis Air National Guard Base perform a quick check before entering a house during the Commando Warrior Urban Operations exercise. The mission of the Regional Training Center of Commando Warrior is to enhance the combat readiness of Pacific Air Forces through training and evaluation of force protection and ground combat skills. Photo: Airman First Class Courtney Witt, U.S. Air Force



Room Sweep. Master Sergeant Bryan Mooreberg, Alaska Air National Guard’s 176th Wing, takes a knee as his partner, Airman First Class Evan Johnston, also of the 176th Wing, clears a room during the Commando Warrior Urban Operations. Photo: Airman First Class Courtney Witt, U.S. Air Force

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Joint Forces

Ready to Serve



ALASKA NATIONAL GUARDSMEN SAVE LIVES WORLDWIDE

By Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

Refueling. An HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter from the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th Rescue Squadron refuels over a flooded plain near Galveston, Texas, in September 2008. The Alaska Air National Guard deployed to the Gulf Coast region in September to perform search-and-rescue missions in the wake of Hurricanes Gustav, Hannah, and Ike and is credited with 16 lives saved. Photo: Technical Sergeant Sean Mitchell, 176th Wing

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The men and women of the Alaska National Guard saved 167 lives in 2008 here in Alaska and around the world.

The 11th Rescue Coordination Center, the sole Alaska representative responsible for all aeronautical search and rescue cases in Alaska, released its end-of-year statistics Dec. 31, 2008, listing annual search and rescue data for the state.

The Alaska National Guard was credited with 79 saves and 10 assists in Alaska, in addition to 72 saves in Afghanistan and 16 on the Gulf Coast while administering hurricane support to Texas and Louisiana.

"Members from the Alaska National Guard were called on for their skills in Afghanistan, the Gulf Coast and here in Alaska



Western Alaska Rescue. Sergeant Robert Pike, right, a 1/207th Aviation crew chief from the Alaska Army National Guard out of Bethel, guides one of four men stranded on four-wheelers in the Goodnews Bay area to the Alaska Army National Guard's UH-60 Black Hawk. The Alaska Army National Guard rescued seven hunters in the area in May 2008. Photo: Captain Michele Edwards, 1/207th Aviation



Saving Lives Overseas. Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th Rescue Squadron conduct Stokes Litter training from an HH-60 Pave Hawk with pararescuemen from the 212th Rescue Squadron while deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Members of the Alaska Air National Guard deployed to Afghanistan in 2008 and were credited with saving 72 lives. Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Tim O'Brien, 210th Rescue Squadron

because they are recognized for professionalism and expertise in search and rescue," said Lieutenant General (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard.

Alaska National Guardsmen provide year-round support for search and rescue in Alaska, with September being the busiest month for search and rescue missions in the state, earning members of the Alaska National Guard 20 saves in 2008.

In addition to performing day-to-day support in Alaska, Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 210th, 211th and 212th Rescue Squadrons deployed to multiple locations in 2008.

In January, Guardsmen deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan, to support combat search and rescue missions in the Global War on Terrorism. During their six-month deployment, Alaska Guardsmen were credited with saving 72 lives, proving that they are among the elite in search and rescue worldwide.

In early September, Guard members were again deployed under the auspices of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, a program that allows Guard units to mobilize upon request to render assistance to other states. Supporting search and rescue efforts in Louisiana and Texas, Guardsmen were awarded 16 saves during Hurricanes Gustav, Hannah and Ike.

Here in Alaska or around the world, Alaska National Guardsmen are recognized for their expertise in search and rescue, and for 167 people in 2008, they're thankful they adhere to the motto, "These Things We Do That Others May Live." ■



Good to Go. An Alaska Army National Guard Soldier of 1/207th Aviation gives the thumbs-up as a UH-60 Black Hawk taxis onto the tarmac at the Alaska Army National Guard Hangar in Bethel during Operation Arctic Care 2009.

Guard Aviators Transport Arctic Care Teams

Story and Photos by Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, DMVA Public Affairs

BETHEL, Alaska ... As part of Operation Arctic Care 2009, the Alaska Army National Guard's 1/207th Aviation Soldiers have been tasked with transporting teams of military health care professionals, supplies and equipment to remote villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. The annual joint forces medical readiness training exercise is designed to simulate military and civilian joint medical outreach operations in times of crisis, conflict or disaster.



Loading Up. First Lieutenant Robert Weakland, left, waits to pass a box of MREs to Chief Warrant Officer Three Bryan Keese, center, and Chief Warrant Officer Three Don Bradford all with the Alaska Army National Guard's 1/207th Aviation. As part of Arctic Care 2009, they loaded a case of medical equipment onto a UH-60 Black Hawk at the Alaska Army National Guard Hangar in Bethel.



Black Hawk Transport. A medical team bound for one of 11 remote villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta during Operation Arctic Care 2009 line up to board a UH-60 Black Hawk manned by a crew of the Alaska Army National Guard's 1/207th Aviation.

"The weather was our biggest hurdle, but even that made this mission a success," said Captain Todd Miller, B Company, 1/207th Aviation company commander. "With the weather forcing our crews to move things around, my pilots and crew chiefs have had to think on their feet to get the job done and meet the needs of Arctic Care."

More than 200 active-duty, Guard, and Reserve personnel from the Army, Alaska Army National Guard, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and uniformed officers with the U.S. Public Health Service came together in conjunction with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation. They provided no-cost

health care, health care education and veterinary services to residents of 11 remote and underserved Alaska Native villages throughout the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta area.

The villages that took part in this year's Arctic Care were Alakanuk, Atmauthluak, Chevak, Hooper Bay, Kalskag, Kwethluk, Kwigillingok, Mountain Village, Newtok, Quinhagak and Toksook Bay. Because of the remoteness of their locations, some of these villages regularly face extreme and challenging weather conditions.

"We had a good crew of people out there doing their darndest to do the right thing and get these doctors and supplies into these villages as safe and timely as possible under adverse snow storms in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta," said Sergeant First Class James Morris, B Company, 1/207th Aviation platoon sergeant.

Morris, who is also a standardization instructor for UH-60 Black Hawk crew chiefs, worked with crew chiefs and mechanics to accommodate the last-minute schedule changes by quickly moving personnel, equipment and supplies from one Black Hawk to another.

"The amount of cargo our Black Hawks can carry in one trip is more than double what a civilian helicopter can carry," Morris said. "Our crews did an amazing job of moving the cargo on and off the aircraft and helped to ensure this mission was a success. The communication skills and the handling of difficult weather conditions in a safely maintained field environment will help us in the future with evasive maneuvers in wartime environments."

According to Warrant Officer Nyles Harrison, B Company, 1/207th Aviation, UH-60 Black Hawk instructor, pilot and instrument flight examiner, the most important thing that Soldiers learned from their involvement in Operation Arctic Care 2009 was crew coordination.

"Our crews need to be able to communicate with each other on the best possible solution to any problems they may face while flying," Harrison said. "They had to rethink and problem solve because of short-notice missions and weather conditions, making crew coordination essential to the smooth execution of each mission."

Though the crews of 1/207th Aviation faced many obstacles during Operation Arctic Care 2009, they faced each with tenacity and team work, helping them to successfully complete their missions. ■

Repair Work. Private First Class Anthony Kline, 1/207th Aviation mechanic, works to remove a damaged part on the tail of a UH-60 Black Hawk during Operation Arctic Care 2009.



Guard Mechanics Ensure Success

By Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, DMVA Public Affairs

BETHEL, Alaska ... Less than one week after Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers with the 1/207th Aviation arrived in Bethel, they were in full swing, keeping five UH-60 Black Hawks running smoothly in support of Operation Arctic Care 2009.

While pilots and crew chiefs transported supplies, personnel and equipment to 11 remote villages, mechanics and crew chiefs-in-training worked late into the night completing required maintenance and repairs to Black Hawks.

With a damaged rotary blade in need of repair on one Black Hawk and a worn-out filter in another, the crew chiefs and mechanics learned first-hand how to deal with multiple obstacles at once and how to be successful in stressful situations – skills that will help them beyond exercise scenarios.

"One of the great things they got the chance to do is change a rotary blade," said Captain Todd Miller, company commander of B Company, 1/207th Aviation. "In my seven years of flying, I have only seen it done twice. So, the crew that worked on that got an experience that they would normally rarely see as a traditional Guard Soldier."

Safety is paramount in the military, so each of the five Black Hawks receive in-depth inspections, maintenance and repairs to prepare it for the next day's missions.

"You don't get this much time over a drill weekend or this kind of real-world experience to prepare new Soldiers for future deployments and real world missions," said Sergeant First Class Robert Nunnally, 1/207th Aviation, platoon sergeant.

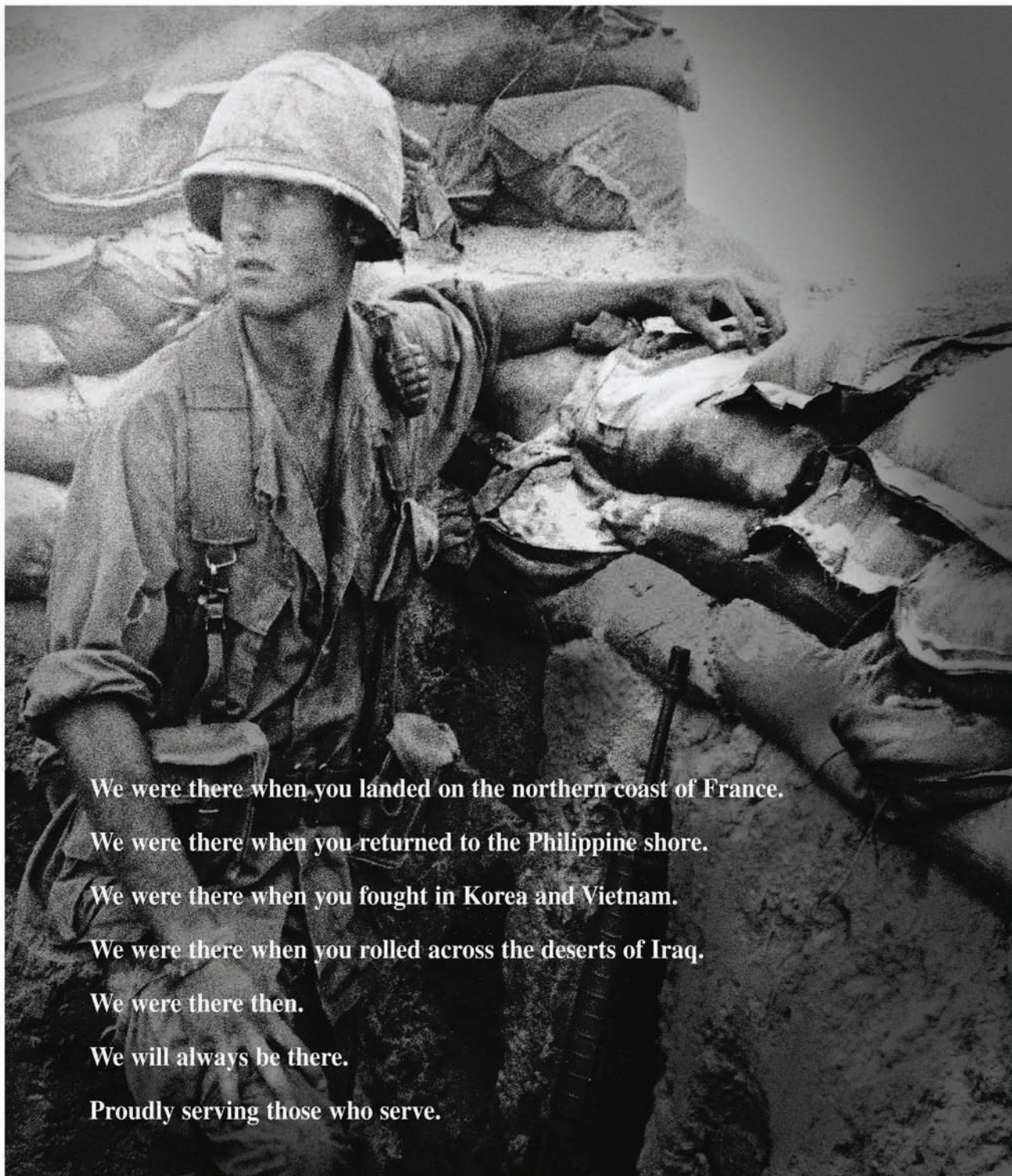
"This is an excellent experience for everyone involved."

Every Black Hawk is inspected daily, then every 10 hours, every 14 days, every 40 hours and every 120 hours. Each inspection is more detailed and in-depth than the previous.

"The crew received some unique training that they might not have had the chance to receive if they hadn't been participating in Arctic Care," Nunnally said. "Because of the increased amount of flying time during Arctic Care, the exercise gave many of the new Soldiers the opportunity to do some of the more in-depth inspections that they don't normally get to."

With every flight, the helicopter runs the potential of something going wrong, so it's the maintenance crew's job to go over the entire aircraft to find any debris, cracks, damages, oil leaks, and normal wear and tear prior to the pilots going up again.

"Our mission was to safely transport teams and supplies to villages in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta," Miller said. "Safety is always our main priority because if just one aircraft goes down, the mission has failed. The Soldiers working on the maintenance of these Black Hawks worked extremely hard to ensure that safety." ■



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KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH TAKES SEISMIC SAFETY STEPS

By Jeremy Zidek, DHS&EM Public Affairs

The Kodiak Island Borough is taking great steps to make the community a safe place for residents to live. In recognition of its efforts, the Kodiak Island Borough received the Western States Seismic Policy Council 2008 Overall Award for Excellence in Mitigation. This is the first time that an Alaska community has won this recognition.

The award comes on the heels of the KIB voluntarily implementing a seismic risk assessment for all public school structures, identifying structural weaknesses and prioritizing at-risk schools for seismic retrofits. The seismic risk assessment spurred funding for projects using a combination of borough, state and federal funds.

The Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management and the Alaska Seismic Safety Commission nominated the KIB for the excellence award for the substantial seismic retrofits made to the island's vulnerable schools.

"The Kodiak Island Borough is the first Alaska community to accomplish a seismic safety evaluation of its entire school system, and then it implemented a remediation program for its at-risk facilities," said John Aho, chairman of the Alaska Seismic Safety Commission. "The borough's work should serve as model for school districts throughout Alaska and hopefully provide the impetus for other districts to implement programs identifying and retrofitting at-risk facilities."

The school retrofit projects included reinforcement of structural supports, installation of lateral bracing, construction of sheer walls and other safety improvements. To accomplish all its identified retrofit projects, the KIB called upon DHS&EM to provide technique assistance in attaining and administering more than \$2.6 million in Hazard Mitigation Planning and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant funds.

"Kodiak Island Borough's accomplishment is unique because it retrofitted five

vulnerable schools simultaneously," said John Madden, director of DHS&EM. "This could not have been completed in the short, four-year time frame without full community support, a dedicated local emergency management staff, and strong partnerships with state and federal agencies."

The State Emergency Response Council recognized the KIB achievement at the Tri-annual Preparedness Conference held in January in Juneau. Department of Military & Veterans Affairs Commissioner and SERC Chairman Lieutenant General (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell presented the KIB with a certificate of recognition and commended its outstanding achievements toward protecting Alaska's number one resource — the children.

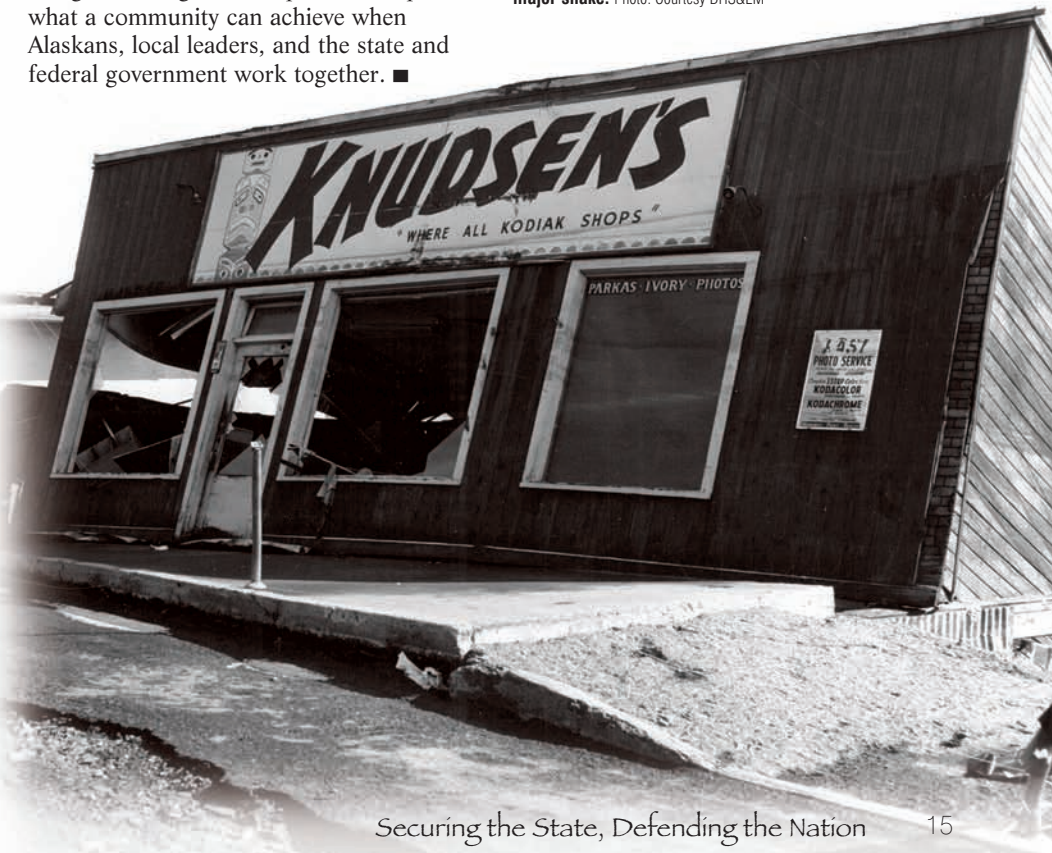
The SERC also highlighted the Kodiak Island Borough School Seismic Hazard Mitigation Program as a prime example of what a community can achieve when Alaskans, local leaders, and the state and federal government work together. ■



Award Winning. John Parrish, left, Western States Seismic Policy Council chairman, presents Charles "Bud" Cassidy, Kodiak Island Borough community development director, the Western States Seismic Policy Council 2008 Overall Award for Excellence in Mitigation. This is the first time that an Alaska community has won this award.

Photo: Amy Lewis, Western States Seismic Policy Council

Past Damage. Kodiak suffered substantial seismic and tsunami damage during the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake. Today, Kodiak is one of Alaska's six Tsunami Ready communities, and its schools are ready for the next major shake. Photo: Courtesy DHS&EM



Alaska Army National Guard Soldier Finishes IDITAROD

By Specialist Paizley Ramsey, 134th Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Alaska Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie crossed the burlled arch in Nome on March 21 at 4:40 a.m. to finish the 2009 Iditarod with 10 of his 16 dogs.

Alexie finished the more than 1,100-mile long race in 12 days, 14 hours and 40 seconds, putting him in 37th place out of 52 finishers. He won the ExxonMobil 37th Iditarod Award in which the oil company presented an Iditarod gold coin valued at \$2,500 to Alexie for being the 37th musher to arrive in Nome

"We are absolutely pleased with Staff Sergeant Alexie's performance in the Iditarod," said Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Lawendowski, Alaska Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention commander. "For anyone to finish a race with a team of dogs requiring constant care in extreme weather for more than 1,000 miles is an awesome accomplishment. His final standing exceeded our expectations."

Guard Dog. This member of Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie's Alaska Army National Guard team lets fans and spectators know he's motivated to race moments before the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in downtown Anchorage.

Photo: Specialist Paizley Ramsey, 134th Public Affairs Detachment



Along the Trail. In the middle of Alaska's wilderness, Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie, Alaska Army National Guard, races along the Iditarod XXXVII trail. Alexie went on to finish in 37th place, winning the ExxonMobil 37th Iditarod Award in which the oil company presented Alexie with an Iditarod gold coin valued at \$2,500. Photo: Brandon Oursler, National Guard Strength Readiness Support Center

A Mentor's Good Luck. Lance Mackey, right, three-time Iditarod champion, sends off Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie, Alaska Army National Guard, with a good luck handshake at the Willow start of the 2009 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Alexie, a 2009 Iditarod rookie, trained with the veteran musher for months leading up to the race at Mackey's Comeback Kennel outside of Fairbanks. Photo: Brandon Oursler, National Guard Strength Readiness Support Center





Soldier and Musher. Staff Sergeant Harry Alexie is the first Alaska Army National Guardsman to run and finish the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Photo: Brandon Oursler, National Guard Strength Readiness Support Center

As a rookie Iditarod sled dog racer, Alexie is elated about his completion of Iditarod XXXVII and considers the experience a personal victory.

"To me it was a once in a lifetime experience, and I'm proud to say that I finished," Alexie said. "Anything I start I must finish is what I tell myself. I found along the way a determination and a willpower that I didn't know I had."

"The Last Great Race on Earth" is a test of endurance, personal courage and mental acuity, and it did not go without its struggles for Alexie, who often found himself pushing the boundaries of his own limits.

"It was tough," Alexie said. "We started in mild temperatures, but once we hit the Yukon River we started facing head winds from the north for about 130 miles. At that point, I felt like turning around, but I knew I was representing the Alaska Army National Guard and myself, and if I quit, all the training would mean nothing."

To prepare for the epic race, Alexie trained with now three-time consecutive Iditarod winner Lance Mackey, who won this year's race and finished on March 18 at 11:38 a.m.

"The training definitely helped Alexie," Lawendowski said. "But, this guy's got a lot of heart, and I think his determination and effort is what pulled him through." ■

Alaska Air National Guard Pilot Uses Love of Sled Dogs to Help Others

By Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... Only weeks after choosing to let go of his life-long dream of finishing the Iditarod Sled Dog Race, an Alaska Air National Guard KC-135 pilot worked diligently to host an annual charity event that uses the adventures of sled dog racing to raise awareness and funds for children with special needs.

Lieutenant Colonel Blake Matray, 168th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 pilot and weapons and tactics chief, organized "Tails from the Trail," a charity banquet and silent auction held in April in Fairbanks.

Just a few weeks earlier, Matray was racing in Iditarod XXXVII as a rookie. He scratched approximately six hours outside of the Iditarod checkpoint, roughly 402 miles from Nome.

Matray made the decision to scratch after pausing to help fellow Iditarod rookie Kim Darst, who had stopped on the trail after one of her dogs looked to be hypothermic. With temperatures quickly plummeting past 20 below zero, deep snow drifts covering the trail, and fierce winds causing limited visibility, Matray made the only decision he felt was right – to stay with Darst and her dogs.

"The most important thing to me in this race was to get to Nome safely and with healthy dogs," Matray said. "I could not just leave her there with her dog in serious trouble just to finish the race."

"I expected this race to be a challenge in which I would face many hardships," Matray continued. "I ran this race for many reasons: my love of Siberian Huskies, sled dog racing, the thrill of finishing the 'Last Great Race on Earth,' but mostly to garner visibility for children with developmental disabilities."

"Tails from the Trail" was started by The Sled Dog Fund Inc., a non-profit organization Matray and his wife, Erin, founded in 2007. They created The Sled Dog Fund Inc. as a way of combining the adventures of sled dog racing with raising awareness of and funds for children with disabilities.

After donating to the Special Olympics for many years, Matray said he always felt like he wanted to do more.

"But with being a musher, a pilot for the Alaska Air National Guard and working a full-time job, it did not leave me much time," Matray said.

The Sled Dog Fund, Inc. was organized in such a way that donations can be made through several formats. First through direct Internet or phone donations, second by sponsoring certain participating mushers per every mile they cover in any of the premier sled dog races, and third through the annual Sled Dog Fund Inc. "Tails from the Trail" charity banquet and silent auction.

"In my book, the challenges faced every day by special-needs children and their families is much harder than anything I faced on the trail," said Matray, who made the decision that this year would be his last attempt to finish the Iditarod. "Their strength and inspiration is what continues to drive me to finish the work I have started with The Sled Dog Fund Inc." ■



For the Love of Dogs. At the start of the 2009 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in downtown Anchorage, Lieutenant Colonel Blake Matray, 168th Air Refueling Wing KC-135 pilot and weapons and tactics chief, spends some time with his team.

Photo: Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, DMVA Public Affairs

Safety Training. Sergeant Peregrina Sanchez, right, and Sergeant Aaron Angol, center, Task Force Arctic Eagle aircraft refuelers, operate a Tri-Max fire extinguisher during training at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo. Soldiers would use the Tri-Max fire extinguisher in case of a fire during aviation operations or aircraft refueling.

Photo: Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Roach, 1/207th Aviation



Task Force Arctic Eagle Digs its Talons into Training

By Specialist Darriel Swatts, 69th Public Affairs Detachment, California Army National Guard

The sound of ice and snow being crushed under boots fills the February morning air. A low, deep hum from a UH-60 Black Hawk engine steadily grows louder as it prepares to take flight. Buttons are pushed and safety checks are done as another day of training begins for Task Force Arctic Eagle.

Alaska Army National Guardsmen from A Company, 1/207th Aviation, have joined forces with C Company, 1/169th General Support Aviation Battalion, from Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md., and together they are part of KFOR 11, a multi-state peacekeeping task force heading to Kosovo to help maintain security and stability. Prior to their arrival, they must train and get validated to show they are ready for the mission.

At their final training site called Camp Albertshof, near Hohenfels, Germany, aviators continue building up their logbooks by practicing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance flights, in addition to responding to medical evacuation requests.



Traveling to Kosovo. An Alaska Black Hawk from 1/207th Aviation lands at Graz, Austria, on the flight to Kosovo. Photo: Courtesy 1/207th Aviation

"They learn all the pieces and parts that go into making a successful mission," said First Lieutenant Molly Huggins, 1/207th Aviation Black Hawk pilot from North Pole. One key maneuver unit they practice with is the Quick Reaction Force, which must respond swiftly and decisively to counter any acts of aggression. The pilots and crews of the birds provide that quickness by being able to transport Soldiers to any part of the U.S. sector within minutes.

"We have designated QRF helicopters ready to go during the day and night," said Captain Michele Edwards, A Company commander from Bethel.

Task Force Arctic Eagle can also help move equipment and supplies via sling loads. They can attach Humvees and weapons, such as artillery, to the bottom of the aircraft and haul them wherever they are needed. With most of Kosovo's terrain being mountainous, this movement ability becomes a real benefit if the target location is remote.

“We try to keep the training as realistic as possible,” said Chief Warrant Officer Two Thomas Buchwald, a Black Hawk pilot from Nome.

One of the real challenges pilots must face when taking to the skies from foreign soil are the flight restrictions that country has created.

“We are so used to having almost no rules on when and where we can fly, it is a challenge to stay within the local regulations,” said Sergeant Christopher Blough, a crew chief from Anchorage. “Also, the terrain is very different. I’m used to flying next to glaciers, around huge mountains and through expansive valleys.”

A new part of the Black Hawk pilots’ mission is providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. AH-64 Apache helicopters used to do those missions, but due to their aggressive look and nature, the utility class Black Hawk has taken over.

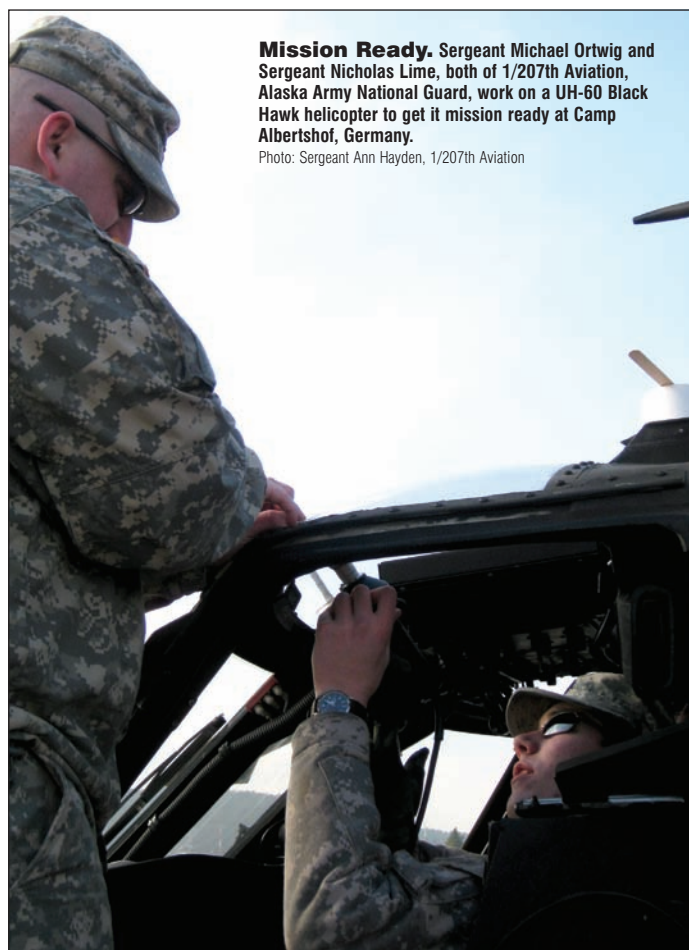
“When the 1/207th went to Kosovo last time, they never had to worry about that particular mission because others were taking care of it,” Edwards said. “Now, we will have to do ISR missions as well as our regular jobs.”

One unique benefit for this unit to belong to a multinational task force is the chance to work and build relationships with other peacekeeping countries. The Republic of Slovenia sent some of its soldiers to Camp Albertshof to give an early taste of what it will be like to operate shoulder to shoulder with foreign troops.

“To be able to train with foreign nationals is a neat thing to do; we don’t get to do that very often back in Alaska,” said Sergeant First Class Seth Gordon, a Black Hawk crew chief from Anchorage.

U.S. Soldiers are only a small part of the Kosovo mission; many other countries are also helping Kosovo get on its feet.

I believe this is a truly noble mission, and I’m proud to be part of it,” Blough said. “We’re helping a country define its own destiny. I can’t think of a nobler mission for the United States to be part of.” ■



Mission Ready. Sergeant Michael Ortwig and Sergeant Nicholas Lime, both of 1/207th Aviation, Alaska Army National Guard, work on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to get it mission ready at Camp Albertshof, Germany.

Photo: Sergeant Ann Hayden, 1/207th Aviation



Transfer of Authority. Lieutenant Colonel Jeff Roach, unfurling flag on right, and Command Sergeant Major Robert Francisco uncse the 1/207th Aviation colors at the transfer of authority ceremony at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, in February. The 1/207th Aviation assumed the aviation support mission for the KFOR 11 rotation, performing flight operations throughout the Kosovo area of responsibility. The 140 Alaska Army National Guard Soldiers, along with 21 Aeromedical Evacuation Soldiers from the Maryland Army National Guard assigned to the 1/207th Aviation Battalion will serve on a one-year deployment. Photo: Courtesy 1/207th Aviation



Missile Defense

COLD COMMITMENT:

Military Police Protect Missile Defense Site in Subzero Temperatures

Story and photos by Master Sergeant Mike R. Smith, National Guard Bureau

FORT GREELY, Alaska ... Before the subzero temperatures, before their feet began to turn numb with cold, before their breath cast an icy fog inside their up-armored Humvee, they were warm.

Back in a garage on the missile defense complex, Specialists Gabriel Ives and Ian Beers, Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Military Police Company, had prepared for their shift Dec. 6. They checked their weapons and clothing – two almost equal necessities when you are securing a missile base near the Arctic Circle.

Both Soldiers grew up in Alaska's harsh winters. Despite the constant darkness, freezing winds and snow storms, they, and many others, choose to protect the Guard's missile mission deep in the state's isolated interior.

While Ives drove the Humvee through snow drifts, Beers checked a perimeter fence surrounding the complex's 850 acres of missile silos and high-security buildings.



Security Scan. Specialist Gabriel Ives, Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Military Police Company, performs a routine security scan of the Missile Defense Complex perimeter.



Patrolling the Perimeter. Specialist Gabriel Ives, left, and Specialist Ian Beers from the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Missile Defense Battalion, Military Police Company, patrol the perimeter of the 850-acre Ground-based Interceptor Missile Defense Complex at Fort Greely during a routine security patrol.

Missile defense may be known for its hot technology, they said, but the military police Soldiers out in the cold here are just as vital to national security.

Two-thirds of the battalion's missile defense forces here, about 130 Soldiers, provide site security for an ever-expanding missile defense complex. The complex has about 24 ground-based interceptor missiles in underground silos, but Defense Department officials say a total of 44 GBIs, the majority of them at Greeley, will be in place by 2013.

As a tactical unit, Fort Greeley manages the only fire direction center with ground-based interceptor missiles on site. It is also one of only two sites in the nation that launch and direct GBI missiles.

The MPs said they face multiple challenges protecting the complex, which range from the extreme weather and the remote location to providing high-level security amid the constant construction and the comings and goings of contractors and distinguished visitors.

They apply a detect, defend and delay site-security concept, which includes monitoring, Humvee patrols, random foot patrols, and building, vehicle and personnel searches.

The military police at Fort Greeley face one of the National Guard's most extreme working environments. Freezing temperatures arrive in mid-September. By the new year, sunlight drops to five hours, and wind chills plummet to minus 60 degrees.

"Having the proper cold weather gear and knowing how to use it is critical," Ives said. "When your feet get cold, you are going to have a miserable day."

Vehicles undergo constant maintenance and are run around-the-clock to keep them from freezing. Weapons have to be covered and specially oiled. Slips, frostbite and hypothermia are constant dangers.

Soldiers stationed here receive a \$150 monthly stipend for their duty in extreme conditions. Their isolation and real-world national defense mission also justify forward deployed status, so none are deployable overseas.

"There's an extreme adjustment that the Soldiers have to go through," said First Lieutenant Ryan Skaw, the company's executive officer. "It's an arctic desert."

Skaw said that everything takes longer preparation.

"There's a lot of snow buildup ... the wind is atrocious here," he said. "Trying to be able to focus and stay focused on what you need to do for the mission becomes more difficult."

When you get down to minus 60 and minus 70 degrees, things start to break, he said. "Even [if] engineers who design it say it won't break, it'll break."

The MPs wear a seven-layer, cold weather system called Generation III issued by the Army Cold Regions Test Center. The center works with the battalion to get feedback on their latest cold weather gear.

Skaw, who grew up on Alaska's offshore island of Kodiak, said the MP mission is open to Soldiers outside of Alaska who are "looking for a challenge." The battalion recruits nationwide, online and through the state's National Guard headquarters in Anchorage.

"We have a lot of extensions here because Soldiers tend to like what Alaska has to offer them," Skaw said. "Most fall in love with Alaska, the great outdoors it offers and love working this mission."

Ives and Beers said the payoff for working this winter comes soon – the summer.

"The summers are great here," Beers said.

"Yeah ... long, warm days," Ives said. ■

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The Leadership ChalleNGe

By Chana Boyko, Alaska Military Youth Academy

CAMP CARROLL, Alaska ... The Alaska Military Youth Academy has been recognized as the “Most Progressive ChalleNGe Program” in the nation.

In February, AMYA graduated 161 cadets, the largest class in its 15-year history. After five-and-a-half months of rigorous academic training, military discipline, physical fitness training, service to community, life skills, job skills, leadership/ followership and responsible citizenship, 93 cadets earned their GED, and five cadets earned their high school diplomas. This represents 61 percent of the class – the highest yield within the last five years.

The vision of the National Guard Alaska Military Youth Academy ChalleNGe Program is to have AMYA recognized as Alaska’s premier program serving at-risk youth. Goals include expanding resources to support projects such as cadet literacy, job placement, cooperative work experiences and enriched academic/ vocational opportunities.

We have recognized literacy acquisition as a gateway skill to every opportunity, and concerted efforts are made to address the needs of each cadet. Abilities range from first grade through post high school as determined at intake with the standardized Test of Adult Basic Education.

Our approach is learner-centered and targeted to each cadet’s academic need. This is particularly valuable to our 16-year-olds who may opt to return to high school. They graduate from the AMYA with remediated skills that enable them to successfully resume their education.

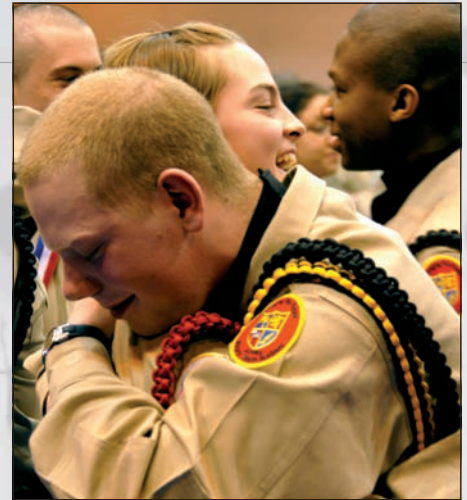
Our literacy program also encompasses vocationally applied academics (work-based learning) so graduates are able to make a smooth transition from school to work. This year, the Academy joined school districts from around the state to pioneer a new initiative which integrates this school-to-work transition.

It participated in Alaska Career Ready, a job skills assessment program teaching practical, real-life applications necessary for career success. Sixty-three graduates of the Alaska Military Youth Academy are among the first 300

people in Alaska who have earned their Career Readiness Certificate through Work Keys. This certificate is portable across the nation and verifies that holders have proficient skills in Applied Math, Reading for Information and Locating Information that employers require in the workplace.

“The Alaska Military Youth Academy provides an excellent opportunity for young people to grow their skills, education, and discipline,” said Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell. “I am very proud of their success and encourage them to continue the positive course they are on.”

Our success requires a collective, unified effort from the entire AMYA community: staff, parents, mentors, service providers, elected officials, business leaders and, of course, the cadets themselves. Our program touches every community throughout the state and thereby strengthens all of Alaska’s youth and America’s future. For those of us committed to helping young people redirect their lives, the challenge is bigger than we are and bigger than our theories. It is a “ChalleNGe” we are willing to live for. ■



Cadet Congratulations. Cadet Andrew Thorson hugs cadet Tasha VanDaam after successfully graduating from the Alaska Military Youth Academy in February.

Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs



Graduation Day! Alaska Military Youth Academy graduates toss their berets in the air following their graduation ceremony on Fort Richardson. One hundred sixty-one cadets graduated as part of the 2009-1 class in February. This was the largest graduating class in the 15-year history of the Alaska Military Youth Academy. Photo: Major Guy Hayes, DMVA Public Affairs

Mentor on the Trail

Story and photo by Specialist Margaret J. Moonin, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... As sled dog racers conquered more than 1,049 miles of the toughest and most stunning terrain known to man, one Alaska Army National Guard Soldier conquered an even tougher force – teaching Alaska’s youth and youth across the nation to “Stay on Track” by staying sober and off drugs.

During the 2009 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, Staff Sergeant Russell Throckmorton, Drug Demand Reduction noncommissioned officer, traveled the trail to provide the most compelling drug education program available as the first Mentor on the Trail. He hopped from community to community along the race path with this year’s Teacher on the Trail, Cathy Walters of Asheville, N.C.

“We are educational partners with the Teacher on the Trail,” Throckmorton said. “All of our staff are trained in teaching life skills and risk assessment, which gives youth powerful tools to be successful in achieving their dreams. The goal of the program is to set youth up for success by teaching them how to empower themselves, make smart choices and be positive peer role models.”

The Mentor on the Trail program was brought to life when the Alaska National Guard presented the Stay on Track Drug Demand Reduction program as a partner to the Iditarod’s national education program, Teacher on the Trail.

“We were looking for a program that shared our hopes and dreams, as well as a positive relationship in the communities and schools,” said Stan Hooley, executive director of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. “We found it in our new partnership with the Alaska National Guard’s Stay on Track program. The Alaska National Guard has been instrumental in bringing mentors into rural and urban communities, and we were very excited to add the education and training they offer to our Iditarod national education program by implementing the Mentor on the Trail program.”

Stay on Track is an innovative, fun, and comprehensive drug-abuse prevention program composed of interactive lessons and team-building opportunities designed to reach out to youth nationwide. In 2008, the Alaska National Guard program



Educating Alaska’s Youth. Alaska U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, left, helps Alaska Army National Guard Staff Sergeant Russell Throckmorton, Drug Demand Reduction noncommissioned officer, announce the new Mentor on the Trail program prior to the ceremonial start of the 2009 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in downtown Anchorage March 7. As the first Mentor on the Trail, Throckmorton partnered with the Teacher on the Trail to provide the most compelling drug education program available.

reached more than 8,800 Alaskans and provided countless Stay on Track classroom sessions to communities throughout the state.

“Reducing drug demand in Alaska is a significant issue,” said Alaska U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski. “Programs like this are key to providing our children with the information and experience needed to be successful in this day and age.”

This year the mentor was an Alaska Army National Guard Soldier, but next

year, every Guard member in the nation will be able to compete to be the next Mentor on the Trail.

“This will give Guardsmen around the nation the opportunity to share in the excitement and adventure of the Iditarod while bringing positive solutions for at-risk behavior to our nation’s youth,” said Chief Warrant Officer Three Scott Frickson, Alaska Army National Guard, Drug Demand Reduction, rural education drug program director. ■



Veterans

By Mercedes Angerman
Alaska State Approving Agency

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ... The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is well underway in its preparation and implementation of the Post-9/11 GI Bill, also known as Chapter 33 – the new GI Bill.

To be eligible for the new benefit, you must have served on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001, for an aggregate period of at least 90 days. Exceptions are made for individuals discharged because of service-connected disabilities who served at least 30 continuous days on active duty after Sept. 10, 2001.

Effective Aug. 1, 2009, the new GI Bill will reflect a myriad of changes to the way educational benefits are currently delivered. However, those who are currently eligible under the Montgomery GI Bill (Chapters 30, 1606 and 1607) can continue to utilize those benefits after converting to Chapter 33 if they are pursuing training that doesn't qualify under the new benefit. As the law currently reads, election of Chapter 33 is irrevocable.

Some of the highlights of this new benefit are:

- A student must be attending an accredited degree-granting institution.
- Tuition and fees will be paid not to exceed the maximum in-state tuition and fees in your state's public institution of higher learning (tuition and fee payments will go directly to the institution).
- A monthly housing allowance* is given based on the Basic Allowance for Housing for an E-5 with dependents (paid directly to the student). **Active duty members, anyone training at half-time or less and those pursuing training solely by distance learning are not eligible for the monthly housing allowance.*
- An annual books and supplies stipend of \$1,000 is paid proportionately based on enrollment.
- A one-time rural benefit payment is available for eligible individuals.

This new bill is highly complex, and this information does not reflect all the intricacies of the requirements to participate. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Web site, www.gibill.va.gov,



Educational Benefits. Mercedes Angerman, left, Alaska State Approving Agency, and Marge Pylant, Central Texas College, discuss the approval process for veterans educational benefits at the Education Center on Fort Richardson. Angerman is the program coordinator for approving postsecondary education and training in Alaska for those using GI Bill educational benefits. Photo: Gary Bond, Embry Riddle Aeronautical University

has a letter to veterans further describing the program, as well as all the up-to-date information regarding eligibility and implementation. It is very important that prospective students be diligent in asking questions of the VA regarding their particular educational goals and how this new benefit melds with those goals.

Questions should be directed through the VA Web site, as listed above, or by calling the education toll-free line at (888) 442-4551. ■

Chapter 33 – The New GI Bill



Family Support

Yellow Ribbon Travel Teams Bring Information to Rural Alaska

By Kalei Brooks, DMVA Public Affairs

CAMP DENALI, Alaska ...

A traveling team from the Alaska National Guard Yellow Ribbon Program visited Nome in early April to provide information and assistance to veterans regarding their benefits and entitlements earned while in service.

Nome was the first stop on the traveling team's agenda, and trips to other rural Alaska communities are in the works and forecasted to run until September 2010.

The goal of these events is to bring information to rural Alaska communities and educate service members on their benefits. Veterans of all military branches, including members of the Alaska Territorial Guard, are encouraged to attend, as well as military dependents and troops currently serving.

On most trips, the traveling team will consist of a State Veterans Service officer, who deals directly with veterans regarding benefits and entitlements; the Transition Assistance Advisor, who provides assistance with transitional services; a Military Family Life Consultant to assist where needed; an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve specialist, who can assist with employer and employment concerns; a Family Assistance specialist, who will bring Family Programs support; and members of the Alaska National Guard command.

The team will be on hand to answer questions and assess the needs of veterans so that the right resources can be directed their way. For example, if veterans don't understand how to get their disability benefits or how to get an appointment with



the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the team can help with those issues.

For more information and to find out when a traveling team is coming your way, contact the Family Programs office toll-free at (888) 917-3608 or local to Anchorage at (907) 428-6663. ■



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International Association of Fire Chiefs Show Support

Story and photo by Jamie Abordonado, ESGR

JUNEAU, Alaska ... Representatives of the International Association of Fire Chiefs signed Statements of Support for the National Guard and Reserve in February. The president of the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, Deputy Chief Doug Schrage, hosted the signing event at the biannual meeting in Juneau.

“Like the National Guard and Reserve, Alaska emergency services rely heavily on the availability of volunteers in service to our communities and nation,” Schrage said. “By signing our statement of support, we mean to show our gratitude both to those in service and those employers who enable them.”

Representatives of the International Association of Fire Chiefs join with thousands of America’s employers in pledging:

- To fully recognize, honor and enforce the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act.
- To ensure that their managers and supervisors will have the tools they need to effectively manage those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve.
- To continually recognize and support our country’s service members and their families in peace, in crises and in war.

Representatives from the State of Alaska Division of Safety, City of Fairbanks Fire Department, Anchorage Fire Department, Capital City Fire Rescue, and North Star Volunteer Fire Department signed the Statement of Support for their employees and volunteers who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs is the voice of fire and emergency service leaders around the world. Established in 1873, the IAFC is a powerful network of nearly 13,000 chief fire and emergency service officers who are the world’s leading experts in firefighting, emergency medical services, terrorism response, hazardous materials, natural disasters, search and rescue, and fire prevention and education.

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972. The mission of ESGR is to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflicts through mediation. ESGR volunteers provide free education, consultation, and if necessary, mediation for employers of Guard and Reserve employees. ■



Standing Together. Five representatives from the International Association of Fire Chiefs each sign a Statement of Support signifying their commitment to supporting Guard and Reserve members in their employment. From left to right: Warren Cummings, City of Fairbanks Fire Department fire chief; Jeff Tucker, North Star Volunteer Fire Department fire chief; Douglas Schrage, Anchorage Fire Department deputy fire chief; Eric Mohrmann, Capital City Fire and Rescue fire chief; and Rocky Ansell, State of Alaska Division of Forestry safety officer.



Who We Are...

What does the Warrior spirit mean to you?

**Private First Class
Jacob Johnson**
207th Aviation Medic



"The warrior spirit is being physically and mentally fit so you can face any challenge put in front of you."

**Staff Sergeant
Elizabeth Robinson**
297th Battlefield
Surveillance Brigade



"It's the internal mind set of being a Soldier – ready to work with your peers to accomplish your mission."

**Lieutenant Colonel
David McPhetres**
Joint Operations Center



"It's putting forward the best in everything I do, embracing the Air Force core values, and ensuring the security and safety of my family, my state and my nation."

Denise Hall
Division of Homeland Security
& Emergency Management



"It's the spirit that not only the military has but also the civilians who support them have – a dedication and commitment to the people and America."

**Staff Sergeant
Joshua Clark**
38th Troop Command
Medical Detachment



"The warrior spirit is pushing yourself beyond any breaking point you thought possible to ensure the safety of your country, your team and your Soldiers."

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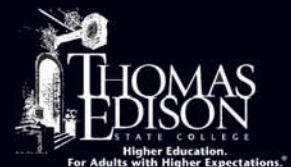
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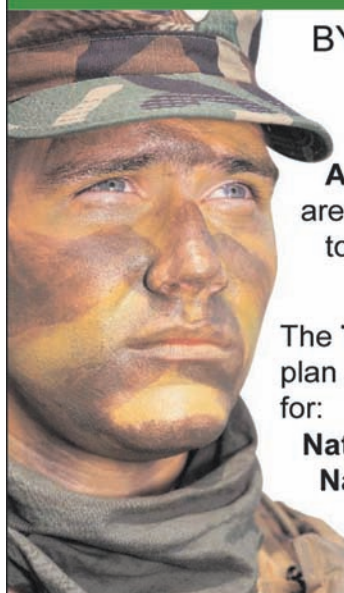


Lt Col Nathan A. Braspeninckx 249th AS

Lt Col Arnetta E. Minney 176th MSG
Maj John D. Breuker 176th ACS
Maj Kay L. Spear Budd 176th WG
Maj David W. Ham 176th MOF
CMSgt Rudolph S. Kula 212th RQS
CMSgt Peter F. Meacham 176th ACS
CMSgt Ronald L. Grether 176th ACS
SMSgt Clifford A. Stockton 176th SFS
SMSgt Kirk L. Whitehurst 211th RQS
SMSgt Roger C. Miller 176th CES
SMSgt Fortunato V. Galvez 176th CES

MSgt Cheryl A. Sweet 176th LRS
MSgt Stephen G. Weyrick 176th ACS
MSgt Patricia L. Clark 176th MDG
TSgt Mark D. Koeckritz 176th AMXS
SFC Samuel Etheridge 49th MDB
SFC Julie Heffele 38th TC
SFC Timothy Harper 49th MDB
MSgt Thomas Stearns JFHQ-AK (Army)
SFC James Whitmore 297th INF
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SMSgt Charles M. Pasco 176th SFS
MSgt Steven T. Paine 176th SFS
MSgt Lisa R. Vincent 176th ACS
TSgt Johnathan J. Damon 176th ACS
TSgt Mathew J. Hermes 176th ACS
SSgt Kevin J. Swiadek 176th ACS
SSgt Phillip V. Bridges 213th SWS

Air Force Achievement Medal



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CMSgt Mark R. Renson 168th MXS
MSgt John P. Miller 168th OG
A1C LeAnn E. Webb 168th OSF

Air Force Reserve Meritorious Service Medal



CMSgt Shannon L. Stalder 168th LRS
SMSgt Richard C. Croteau 168th MXS
SMSgt Steven J. Forgue 168th ARS
SMSgt James P. Wolverton 168th OSF
MSgt Robert C. Dowler 168th LRS
MSgt Kendra J. Halbert 168th ARS
MSgt Victoria L. Green 168th ARS
MSgt Cynthia A. Kirgan 168th ARS
MSgt Michael B. Malatek 168th MXS
MSgt John P. Miller 168th OG
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 TSgt Ricky R. Ramos 213th SWS
 TSgt Sarah J. Willey 168th CF
 SSgt Terry J. Ahsehn 168th MXS
 SSgt Kathryn E. Baines 168th MDG
 SSgt Charles J. Fischer Jr. 213th SWS
 SSgt Roy A. Lashley 168th MXS
 SSgt Kenneth E. Lewis 213th SWS

Iraq Campaign Medal



SMSgt Pamela G. Cox 168th OSF

Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal



1Lt Manuel de Diego III 168th MXG

Armed Forces Reserve Medal



MSgt Heather G. David-Damm ... 168th MSF
 MSgt Lorri A. Heneveld 168th ARW
 MSgt Mark T. Ruedy 168th AMXS
 MSgt Kaleo A. Vicente 168th SFS
 TSgt Kyla M. Root 168th MXS

Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device



1Lt Manuel de Diego III 168th MXG
 SMSgt Pamela G. Cox 168th OSF

Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon w/Gold Border



1Lt Manuel de Diego III 168th MXG
 SMSgt Pamela G. Cox 168th OSF

Alaska Distinguished Service Medal



SSgt Robert Spinks 297th SPT
 CW3 Stephen Law 207th AVN
 MSgt Jennifer Reader JFHQ-AK (Army)
 Sgt Lawrence Esmailka 297th IN
 Brig Gen Julio Banez 207th INF

Alaska Commendation Medal



SSgt Jacqueline Tyson 49th MDB



Alaska Distinguished Service Medal. Brigadier General Deborah McManus, left, commander of the Alaska Air National Guard, congratulates Lieutenant Colonel Tom Esser, German Army Reserves with U.S. Army Europe Command, while awarding him the Alaska Distinguished Service Medal at the Hercules Theater on Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Esser was recognized for his outstanding meritorious service as team manager and German liaison to the Airborne Warning and Control System U.S. Air Force Team, NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen, Germany, from Dec. 27, 1993, to Dec. 1, 2007. The Alaska Air National Guard's 168th Air Refueling Wing supports the AWACS for NATO with aerial refueling and usually deploys to Geilenkirchen NATO Air Base every year for at least two weeks at a time. Esser's efforts in guiding and translating during each of the eight Alaska deployments resulted in a highly educational experience and fostered a greater understanding of the historical hardships and sacrifices during WWII.

Photo: Chief Master Sergeant Dan Anderson, 176th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron



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Benjamin S. Douglas DET 1 176th OG
Kyle Holt 297th MP BN
Myles Tenbroeck 103rd CST
Timothy Brower 297th BFSB
Scott Ketcham MED DET

Captain

James Johnson 207th AVN
Brett Haker 207th AVN
Amy Slinker 134th PAD
Brandon Stephens 168th ARS
Eric L. Vantrease 213th SWS

First Lieutenant

John M. Jasper 176th OG
John T. Callahan 176th WG
Jeremy D. Groat 210th RQS
Stan Skaw 207th AVN

Jessica M. Hill 168th MSF

Second Lieutenant

Sherry L. Ferno 176th SFS

Chief Warrant Officer Four

Mark Ward 207th AVN

Chief Warrant Officer Three

Dominic Kuntz 207th AVN

Chief Warrant Officer Two

Nathan Rehm 207th AVN

Sergeant Major

Shawn McLeod 297th CAV

Chief Master Sergeant

Robert M. Stamm DEC 1 176th OG
Eric K. Schisler 211th RQS

Senior Master Sergeant

John W. Gaikowski III 168th CF
Tracy L. Magill 168th ARW

Master Sergeant (E-8)

Phillip Davis 207th AVN

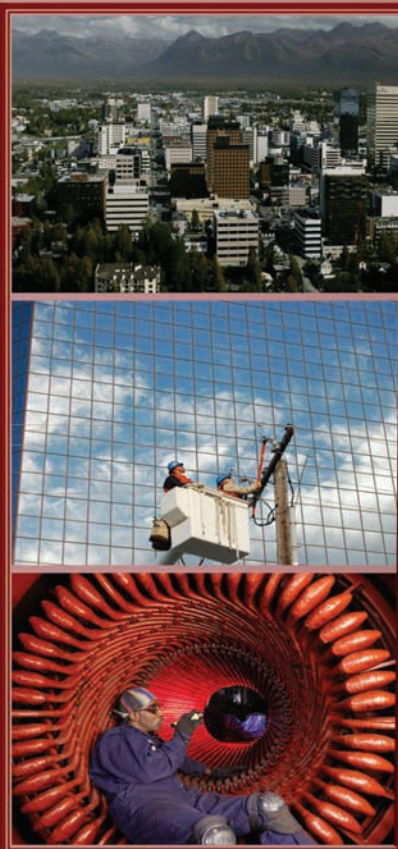
William Giese 297th BFSB
Garth Massay 297th SIG

Sergeant First Class

Archibald Tirado 207th AVN
Arturo Bautista 207th AVN
Jarrett Carson RRD
Troy Godwin 103rd CST
Robert Lauer 297th BFSB

Master Sergeant (E-7)

Denny B. Wallete 176th AMXS
Michael J. Sullivan Jr. 212th RQS
Jeremy L. Lilly 212th RQS
James R. Zagorski 211th RQS
Jason M. Johnson JFHQ-AK (Air)
Phillip R. Almeda 176th WG
Mack H. Schwalm Jr. 176th CES
Jack D. Parks 176th LRS
Lisa R. Vincent 176th ACS
Thomas L. Miller 176th MXS
James A. Johnson 168th SFS
Dennis K. Jutras 168th AMXS
Sharon M. McCool 168th OSF
Erik P. Storoy 213th SWS
Kaleo A. Vicente 168th SFS



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Mark Delgado 207th AVN
Chris Mattson 207th AVN
Billy J. Austin Co F 207th Avn
Jeremy Christensen 49th MDB
Jeremy Curtis 49th MDB
Michael Dennis 297th BFSB
John Dvorak III 49th MDB
Clifton Thompson 49th MDB
Barbara Waggoner 207th BSC

Technical Sergeant

Shelana R. Richards 176th MXS
Scott G. Nelsen 211th RQS
Jason E. Posey 176th MXS
Daniel J. Roy 211th RQS
Stephannie J. Carrier DET 1 176th OG
Patricia D. Ashcraft 176th ACS
Royce C. Talley 176th LRS
Jenny L. Hagensieker 168th CF
Robert C. Hall 168th SFS
Nathan L. Harbour 168th SFS
Ramon Herrera 168th MXS
Joshua A. McDaniel 213th SWS
Carleas L. Parsons 213th SWS
Deanna M. Roberts 168th MDG

Carrie L. Stokes 168th MSG
Tyler J. Toth, Jr. 168th MSF
Thomas E. Wright II 213th SWS

Sergeant

Christopher Blough 207th AVN
Ayanna Clifton 207th AVN
Kenneth Larrabee 207th AVN
Matthew Campbell 49th MDB
Angela Carelock 297th BFSB

Staff Sergeant

Shaun R. Wehe 210th RQS
Justin D. Bradley 176th SFS
James J. Castagna 144th AS
Shalamar L. Jenkins 175th SFS
Wayne R. Marquis 210th RQS
Jeanie S. Cruz 168th MDG
Sean K. Finney 168th MXS
Brandilyn D. Hubbart 168th MOF
Rachel J. Knight 168th ARW
Justin K. Sawyer 168th AMXS
James D. Sjoblom 168th MXS
Dusty L. Spencer 168th MXS
John A. Tweed 168th MXS

RETIREMENTS

Peter Katinsky 211th RQS
Ronald Grether 176th ACS
Peter Meacham 176th ACS
Rudolph Kula 212th RQS
Jennifer Keese 144th AS
Robert Kopp 176th ACS
Clifford Stockton 176th SVF
Wendy Brown 176th WG
Kirk Whitehurst 211th RQS
Patricia Clark 176th MDG
Curtis Bills 176th MXS
Robert Tomlinson 176th LRS
Albert Felder 176th LRS
Mark Koeckritz 176th AMXS
Kenneth Jackson 176th LRS
SMSgt Brett S. Ayres 168th ARS
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Leonard Aquino
Bentley Davis
Blanche Demientieff
Seth Worley
Robert Parrish
Christopher Sawtelle
Chantel Jones

297th Infantry

Allen Isabell
Rickey Edwards
Romeo Manzano
Danny Ancheta
Justin Taylor
Jason Nocelo
Eric Kassaiuli
Robert Percival

Medical Detachment

Danyelle Lunsford
Emily Randolph

207th Brigade Support Command

Sean McGinnis
Benjamin Symons
Simeon Bedingfield
Jonathan Rhein
Michelle Chitpaseuth
Timothy Reed
Thurneau Tristen
James Karels
Ian Durbin
Mitchell Alexander
Anthony Sousa
Melinda Dawson
Trentin Frederick
John Magee
Donovan Hamilton

297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade

Melissa Drake
Jose Cantu II
Justen Gobbi
Mark Brataas

297th Reconnaissance & Surveillance

Jonathan Williams
Carlos Deleon

Troy Hicks
Heidi Phelps
Billy McDonald
John Harrington
Joshua Achkio

Joint Forces Headquarters

Robert Gertsch Jr
Diane Singh

297th Cavalry

Eric Prieto

176th Wing

Brian Garverick
Matthew Sampley
Aaron Brehm
Justin Lawson
Jessica Newton
John Jasper
Glenn Ott
Nicholas Ryan Gibson
Matthew Posey
Travis Garrison
James Fletcher
Jerod Bogert
Charles Ray James Broadwater
Myungjin Chun
Edward Jones
Wayne Marquis

Roy Bainbridge
Samuel Dixon
Aaron Hug
Joann Wright
Tyler Mullen
Ryan Ouellette
Benjamin Douglas
Kendalin Roberts
Vanessa Ortiz
Travis Durtschi
Wayne Scott
Adam Woolley
Daniel Miller
David Rasmussen
Joshua Vanderbrink
Jay Mendoza
Derek Ostrom
Robert Simpson
Ausdin Lemmons
Shynowah Lee
Rachel Martin
Joshua Ryan
Daniel Tierney
Ashley Hood
Brian Rhodes
Jeremy Rhodes
Anthony Kretz
Stanley Montgomery
Robert Roe
Todd Tumidanski

Gregory Kopp
Shannon Hutcheon
Jacob Eibeck
Paul Douthit
Jennifer Flood
Philip Martin
Michael Wachel
Desiree Perham
Eric Johnson
Tulio Perez
Andrew Riffe
Lyndi Johnson

168th Air Refueling Wing

Steven Tucker
Marvin Farmer
Amanda Perrizo
Kyle Pokerney
Shamika Emerson
Erica Dean
Jasmine Davis
Gregory Lutrell
Jackie Rutiglian
Thuman Robinson
Justin Smith
Corina Banning
Krystal Madison
Stephen Gregory
Jennifer Davis
Jason Mills

Warriors Training Schedule

Here are the inactive training dates for most Alaska Army and Air National Guard units. All dates are subject to change.

Alaska National Guard	May	June	July
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Air)	14-17	6-7	No Drill
Joint Forces Headquarters – Alaska (Army)	1-3	6-7	No Drill
Alaska Army National Guard			
297th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade	1-3	6-7	No Drill
38th Troop Command	1-3	6-7	No Drill
Alaska Air National Guard			
168th Air Refueling Wing	16-19	No Drill	11-12
176th Wing	14-17	6-7	No Drill
Alaska State Defense Force			
Headquarters	16-17	20-21	18-19

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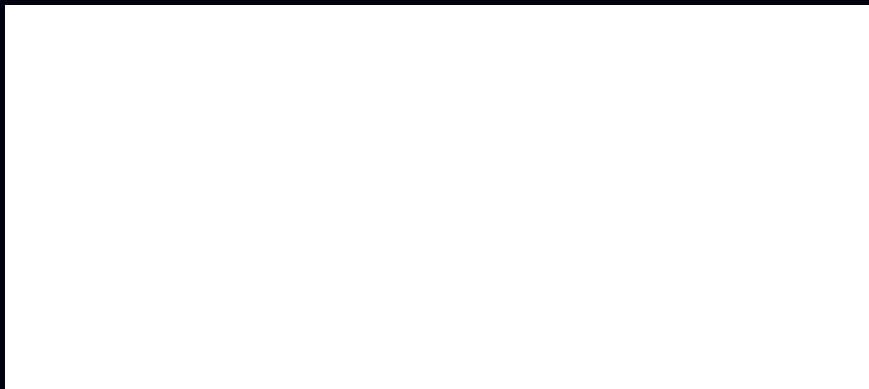
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